

*Joseph Auslander has been elected Editor for September, October, and November*

# THE MEASURE

## A JOURNAL OF POETRY



Poems by Richard Butler Glaenzer, Maxwell  
Anderson, Faith Baldwin, Malcolm Vaughan, Anne  
Atwood Dodge, and Others — — — — —

That Side the Moon — — — — —

\$2.50 by the Year — — — — — Single Copies 25c

Published Monthly at 449 West 22nd Street, New York, N. Y.

Number 19 — — — — — September, 1922

Entered as second-class matter February 28, 1921, at the post office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879

# Contents

## POEMS

Page

Apples Falling. By Louise Townsend Nicholl.....	3
It. By Richard Butler Glaenzer.....	5
"Who Has Burned His Wings." By Maxwell Anderson.....	5
Sonnets in Memoriam. By Faith Baldwin.....	6
The House Summit-Set. By John Loftus.....	7
The Word. By Orestes Trueblood.....	7
Interim. By Sydney King Russell.....	8
Coast of Georgia. By Malcolm Vaughan.....	8
Deep Desire is Memory. By Malcolm Vaughan.....	9
For Those Inland. By George O'Neil.....	10
Events. By George O'Neil.....	10
The Parable of the Orchard. By George O'Neil.....	11
Tonight the Gypsies Wait for You. By Charles Divine.....	12
Crucible. By Lucy Hale Sturges.....	13
Inarticulation. By Frances L. Cooper.....	13
The Band Concert. By Anne Atwood Dodge.....	14

## EDITORIAL

That Side the Moon. By Joseph Auslander.....	15
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## IN REVIEW

The Desert Blossoms. By Frank Ernest Hill.....	17
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# The Measure

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### Apples Falling

ALL night long, in the close September darkness,  
The apples fall,  
Loosening high,  
Dropping with swiftly-muffled thud  
Upon the ground.  
And there is a line of straightness between that high,  
Still, mysterious loosening and the ground,  
And at the end of the line the apple,  
Let down upon the earth,  
Round upon round—  
So that all night straight pillars are dropped,  
Straight pillars with rounded bases,  
Which will not show by day.

*So quiet is the loosening  
One cannot tell at all  
By the hushed dullness of the thud  
How long has been the fall.  
Some hung high and some hung low,  
Each with a different length to go—  
But thud and fall and muffled thud  
And every sound the same,  
And never a way for an ear to tell  
How far an apple came.*

There is no thought now of red on green,  
Here in the darkness.  
There is no pungency of odor coming in  
At the cool, wide square of black.



And the biting into them is unthinkable now—  
The crisp sound of teeth in the watery white fibre of the apple—  
The juice, the seeds shaped maddeningly black and perfect—  
Their crunching sound when chewed.  
There are no vivid things like sight and taste and smell  
Here in the thudded dark—  
Only the dimmer, deeper, mystic ones  
Of sound and an imagined touch.  
Now for a little while that thought of touch must linger—  
Of how it feels to the earth to get and hold  
Its rounded, dropping treasure.  
There is quick, irrelevant need for an apple curved into  
The hollow of a palm;  
And then the soothing sense  
Of the nest-like place the apple makes  
In the matted, old September grass.

Then touch, too, goes, and there is only  
Sound,  
The hush of unseen red onto its unseen green.  
The darkness, close and near, is punctuate  
With apples dropping to the ground.

*They fall, but I do not see them,  
Red on the brown-green ground;  
And if my ear were stopped with sleep,  
There would be no sound.*

And yet, here in the darkness,  
Unseen, unheard, this would go on.  
In a hundred long gardens of the earth tonight,  
Where no ear is,  
The apples fall.  
No sight, no taste, no smell—  
No rounded touch, no sound—  
But apples falling, falling,  
Falling to the ground.

*Louise Townsend Nicholl*

## It

**A** GAIN it has eluded me, this thing  
Which seems to fade before my mind can wake  
To what it is or how to overtake  
That which it may be, as we guess a spring  
From cold streaks in a pond or by its sting  
The gnat or fish by ripples on a lake;  
But this leaves less impression than birds make  
Upon the air or air upon a ring.

So insubstantial, fugitive, aloof,  
And yet more haunting than a dream or hint  
Of immortality. It makes me feel  
That, were I but a bit less blind, the proof  
All of us always seek would flash as flint  
Flashes when struck, though clumsily, on steel.

—*Richard Butler Glaenzer*

## “Who Has Burned His Wings”

**W**HO has burned his wings on the winds in a dusty sunset—  
Who has sung a stave in the teeth of stars falling—  
Who has blown on edge in the wind when the skies were whirled—

Who has seen the earth high in the heavens shadowy climbing—  
Who has seen the pock-faced moon come near in the darkness—  
Who has run under the earth over cloud in fear—

Who has broken the winds to his whip and driven them headlong—  
Who has slipped the leash of the planets and ridden athwart them—  
Who has burned his wings on the cold winds—and forgotten?

—*Maxwell Anderson*

## Sonnets in Memoriam

### I

O H, I have learned to vanquish lesser loss,  
The arrogant, white ache of widowed flesh;  
From harvest memories have learned to thresh  
The chaff of longing senses; this, I toss  
To winds, obliterating. In his cell  
The prisoner for life learns oblique peace,  
Once cognizant there shall be no release,  
No sudden freedom, this grey side of hell.  
But this I cannot bear; birdsong through rain,  
Old gardens yielding color; and the low,  
Red lantern of the moon; the scarlet stain  
Of roses, shod with dew. You loved them so.  
The stoic flesh is stone; but Beauty bears  
Thin swords to pierce the quick soul unawares.

### II

They laid you in a very quiet place,  
With ancient rite, and ancient, lovely speech,  
And ancient earth, through which no cry may reach,  
Flings immemorial grass above your face.  
I am a pilgrim to this gentle spot,  
And linger here, somehow unstirred by grief,  
That you lie hidden here is past belief,  
Such certainty I have that you do not.  
The grave is kinder to me than your room,  
You *lived* in that; it wounds me with your eyes,  
It blinds me with your smile, remote and wise  
And weaves your gestures on a secret loom.  
The very walls take voice. Alone, I save  
My weary reason by your empty grave.

—Faith Baldwin

## The House Summit-Set

SUMMIT-SET it is,  
Uncordial and aloof;  
The wind-haunted trees  
Tower above its roof.

There one looks forth  
Far, east and west  
And south and north,  
From the hill's crest.

But no welcome flickers  
From a friendly light  
Across the sleeping acres  
When it is night.

Uncordial and aloof it is  
Like a witch'd place,  
Where, amid its windy tree  
It looks forth at space.

—*John Loftus*

## The Word

THERE they sat in a room  
And watched the embers char;  
The embers sparked into  
Soft ashes, star on star.

They did not guess  
That they sat beneath a spell,  
And the embers of the hours  
Charred as the ashes fell.

One word to save them both! . . .  
But neither spoke the word;—  
And the ashes of the hours  
Covered it, unheard.

*Orestes Trueblood*



## Interim

DEATH came and found him . . . suddenly, in sleep  
Where he had thrown himself for weariness  
Upon his homely couch, and shut the door  
On all the cares that marked his day of toil.  
Somewhere a clock struck seven; voices rose  
Beyond, and fell; then all again was still.  
A fly buzzed vaguely on the window pane.  
Soft breezes stirred the curtains; this, his room  
With faded walls, familiar chairs and bed,  
Its window looking to the quiet west,  
Seemed as before, yet subtly different  
When she, his wife, came in, and stood and coughed  
Her little conscious cough, and spoke his name;  
Smiled to herself, crossed over, drew the blinds  
And spoke his name again, close at his side,  
And leaned, and could not waken him at all.

—Sydney King Russell

## Coast of Georgia

THE marshes have surrendered, as a bride,  
To the full-flooding sea; and sodden brush  
And pulpous water-weeds are growing lush  
With life,—among the dark arms of the tide.  
At ebbing-time these grasses drooped and died  
To brooding desolation: now they flush  
Resuscitant again, feeling the rush  
Of swiftly-welling rivers at their side.

Somewhere in the dusk a mocking-bird is singing  
Its ornate heart out in tempestuous tune,  
And suddenly, flamingos flying!—stringing  
In lanky silhouette across the moon.  
All else is black; and silent, save the deep,  
Somnolent ocean, swaying itself to sleep.



## Deep Desire is Memory

OVER the languid moon were clouds afloat;  
And lulled asleep, the purple hills were dreaming;  
I think that in all Greece were none awake  
Save you and I, together in the dark.  
There must have come a rift of cloud, a break,  
A shaft of brilliant moonlight streaming  
Across your couch—because I could remark  
The shadow of my fingers near your throat.

And in that night your soft slow speech,  
Your laugh, and your ingenuous wondering  
If love could die, if death could come to such  
As then we were. You moved; and turned your head;  
And whispered that we must love overmuch,  
Before the dawn, lest all the sundering  
Of one lone day, perhaps, should find us dead;  
Should find the other's body out of reach.

O, centuries have hushed the words you said.  
And you I had forgotten, even you.  
The old-known hills of Greece had passed from mind.  
But the shadow of my fingers near some throat  
Has haunted me, although I could not find  
A pattern for the phantom that I knew.  
And when, just now, beneath these clouds afloat  
Across the moon, you tossed your Greek-like head,  
It all flashed back; that you and I are dead.

—*Malcolm Vaughan*

## For Those Inland

ON this page I will put the blue of the sea  
And gnarled trees blowing on a sandy ledge,  
The long sharp waves breaking unceasingly,  
Tossing thick foam upon the russet sedge.  
Here, blue-white shells embedded in the sand  
Glisten and bubble as the waters ebb;  
A smell of salt blows inward on the land  
Where thin mist sparkles like a spider-web.

Here you may look and see a cloud that blows  
Across the far horizon's perfect rim  
Made lonelier for one dark ship that goes,  
Dragging its smoke where there is gold to dim.  
Learn fortitude where broken winds are caught  
In tortured waves that climb and crash and lull . . .  
Lean with courageous oaks and let your thought  
Soar starward with a great slow-curving gull.

## Events

THE queen of Egypt yawned and frowned  
And twisted all her rings around,  
Her thoughts were still, her pulse was slow  
While kings and courtiers bowed below.  
Upon a gem encrusted throne  
The queen of Egypt sat alone,  
Hating her sterile gorgeous land,  
When, suddenly, against her hand,  
Between two curves of tortoise-shell,  
A sulky little rain-drop fell.  
The queen threw back her head and stared,  
And on her brow the lightning flared . . .

As Tristan and Isolde lay,  
Dreaming their happiness away  
Within the forest quiet-boughed,  
A thrush came in a morning cloud.  
And through the foliage of an oak  
A silver fountain rose and broke,  
Quivering leaves that drooped afar,  
Still drowsing with the night's last star.  
Embracing shadows grew estranged,  
The dreaming of the dreamers changed;  
The thrush sang on and Tristan slept,  
But sad Isolde woke and wept.

Napoleon turned his horse about  
And down the steepest path set out,  
Letting the horse go on alone,  
Picking its way from stone to stone.  
The trees stood leafless on the hill,  
The puddles in the clay lay still.  
Napoleon set his gaze below;  
The west was streaked with afterglow.  
They struck the highway . . . up its side  
The horse, without a warning, shied . . .  
In scarlet water on the road,  
Still as a sea-rock, sat a toad.

## The Parable of the Orchard

**K**EEN fragrance clouds above the world,  
The orchard trees are billowing,  
Flowering light of snow and flame,  
Hill after hill is touched with Spring.

What is more beautiful than this?  
Walk on the soft earth through the shade  
Of delicate boughs that beak the sun  
To patterns exquisitely laid.

Shatter a branch and feel its word  
Capture a shadow in your heart . . .  
The wet cold dew is for your lips,  
The white depths for your arms to part.

Ah, hide your shoulders there where light  
Has caught the year's imagining,  
Shake foam from rigid boughs where soon  
On brittle stems hard fruit shall swing.

—George O'Neil

## Tonight the Gypsies Wait for You

TONIGHT the gypsies wait for you  
Beyond the edge of town  
With lantern-lustre on their throats  
And black locks hanging down,  
For one who knows the teeth of combs  
Will look for broken strands  
When white with silver lies the road  
And gypsies wave their hands.

Go join them where the fire is low,  
Your *Inn of Stars* but waits  
With shutters built of wind and dreams  
And grasses for the gates.  
No grief shall shake my silent house  
While you with gypsies flee—  
Some night of silver-ribboned roads  
The call may come to me.

—Charles Divine



## Crucible

**I**F a man's soul be fed  
On stones and metal  
It will grow thin and shrivel . . .

Are you misled  
By the blue fire in a stone?  
Desire alone  
Will not boil your kettle  
Nor bake your bread.

And what of bread, you ask  
When there's blue fire in a stone,  
And white fire in metal?  
Life's a masque, not a battle,  
And your desire and your task  
Is to watch the blue fire  
And tend the white fire  
Alone.

And your soul is like a withered petal.

—*Lucy Hale Sturges*

## Inarticulation

**H**ER sigh is louder than a scream.  
She speaks his name and sighs.  
At dawn she wakes and tells her dream  
Of him, then stops—and sighs.

Oh, Lord! How restful it would be  
If she would scream—just once—for me!

—*Frances L. Cooper*

## The Band Concert

THE band brayed loudly where the blinding light  
Beat back the encroaching loveliness of night,  
And boys with hot moist pennies in their hands  
Swarmed fierce about the whistling peanut stands.  
The old were quiet underneath the trees,  
And children ran, but, oh, beyond all these  
Bright Adolescence claimed the summer hour  
And wore brief romance like a scarlet flower  
Where round and round the slow procession moved  
Through light and shadow, lover and beloved.  
In the kind night each dull unlovely face  
Took on a hint of wistful borrowed grace,  
And dusk was kind to the too fine attire,  
Moulding a beauty to the soul's desire  
Out of the tawdry effort to be fair.  
Shrill laughter drifted on the quiet air,  
And Love went by, alone amid the crowd,  
Wordless and awed and pitiful and proud.

—*Anne Arwood Dodge*

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Published monthly by the Editors at 449 West 22nd St., N. Y.

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*Edited by Maxwell Anderson, Joseph Auslander, Padraic Colum, Carolyn Hall, Frank Ernest Hill, Louise Townsend Nicholl, George O'Neil, Pitts Sanborn, Genevieve Taggard, Winifred Welles. From these ten an acting editor and an assistant are elected quarterly by the board.*

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## *That Side the Moon*

"I question not my corporeal eye any more than I would question a window concerning a sight. I look through it, and not with it."

YESTERDAY it was pathetically easy to exclaim, Madman! and consign Blake to Bedlam. But we are a day older now and we say, Perhaps Henry Vaughan did see Eternity the other night; perhaps William Blake did possess his "visions and peace." And we say it very quietly.

The pity of it is that our own poets have become fiercely engrossed with physical perception for its own sake. Precise, glittering, microscopic, they have ransacked the treasuries of sense; they have filled the museums and arsenals of poetry with brilliant pebbles, moth-stripes, gorgeous bits of precision. But the galleries, vigilant and lavish, smell of death.

We confess the grandeur of this cataloguing. We know that the eye is "the only notebook of the true poet." We insist, nevertheless, that it is the notebook and not the poet. We must give up our habit of lighting candles to examine the dawn:

State contenti, umane gente, al quia . . .

Do not embarrass the rose with labels or you will find yourself staring at an eventual turnip. Instead of the cry, Coming, Aphrodite! the slogan is, Page Medusa! And so, like Ugolino, we are turned to stone within.

"The art of the pen" (we recall Meredith's Diana in a justly celebrated passage) "is to rouse the inward vision, instead of labouring with a drop-scene brush, as if it were to the eye." It is only such as can submit

to be blasted with excess of light who shall travel the Road to Xanadu—or Olivet. "For the eternal longings and intentions and experiences of human nature . . . find their vent . . . in those vivid flashes of phrase, those instantaneous bolts of passionate conception, whose furrow of splendour across the eye-balls of the mind leaves them momentarily dark to the outward universe, only to quicken their vision of inward and incommunicable things."

Our poets have been content to finger surfaces—and stop there. The vesture of the priest, the consecration and the magistracy of the ancient office of Vates, the penetrating and the Voice—these are taboo, neglected, forgotten. The power of forming and sustaining that Arnold spoke of as the function of the best poetry, the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge, is no longer invoked. The poet sees much today, but he is hardly a seer. We are sightless and there is none among the lords of song to put spittle upon our eyes and make us whole. For the true seer should bestow, not merely receive, vision.

We have no Namer for our generation. Everything awaits the new Adam. We are living in what is perhaps the most dramatic period the world has ever known. The tumult and complexity, the massive common-placeness of death, the trampling down of empires, the fever of sex, the dust of illusions, dreams wrenched, aborted, thrice denied—and through it all and above it all Beauty stepping madly out with flame across her eyes! And the poets continue to pipe diminutive lyrics or hunt down fresh dinosaurs of irregularity, while at the very instant the words of earth are moved out of a long sleep and there is the beating of breasts.

On fire with creative discontent, grunting under fardels or bumping the stars, our poets live, love, suffer—and sing in parvo. We are ashamed and afraid of interpretations and meanings. We dread the large accent, the revelatory speech, the heroic dimensions. We endure Egypt. And yet

"O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant; but I am slow of speech and of a slow tongue. And the Lord said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? Have not I, the Lord? Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth and teach thee what thou shalt say."

*Joseph Auslander*



## *The Desert Blossoms*

*In Colors of the West*, by Glenn Ward Dresbach. Henry Holt and Company, New York.

I CAN conceive of fastidious persons picking up Mr. Dresbach's book, reading a line or two or even a poem or two, and going no further. There are passages and poems in the volume which have little distinction. But I cannot picture anyone who is open to new themes and new music in poetry reading a dozen consecutive pages of *In Colors of the West* without being stirred by that exciting uneasiness which flows from a contact with originality.

That originality consists in the discovery of a hitherto undiscovered field and the achieving of a natural but individual expression. Mr. Dresbach has discovered the southwest. Other poets have written at it, but to my knowledge they have never expressed any great or significant part of it. Mr. Dresbach has indicated its place in human life. He has escaped the sin of making pictures of it merely, and he has escaped the sin of glorifying it with praise. He has simply brought it into poetry as a place where men have loved and dreamed and cursed and toiled. This is a service that is not adequately done in the present volume, but the volume gives a promise of completed work which somehow seems authentic.

Unfortunately Mr. Dresbach seldom writes poems that are wholly his best. He is always explicit, and sometimes in his desire to make himself clear he becomes stumbling and prosaic on the very heels of ecstasy. I know of few things with a finer note than the lyric beginning

I am one who has seen  
The leaves dying, the leaves falling . . .  
In the nights I have heard  
The trees sighing, the winds calling . . .

but the ending of the cry is weak. Again, Mr. Dresbach has a tendency to draw conclusions, and he is not always sure of getting them stated without an air of moral solemnity. If the vivid narrative "Wild Apples" had a better beginning and an ending that was just story instead of comment on the story it would rank with the best narrative verse written in the last twenty years. Passages are excellent. Personally I love the homely touch in the following:

The girl came up to Malcolm.  
"I'll go, too,"  
She said, "I am not good enough for you.  
I want for something different than I know  
But might not keep it if I had a show."

"Wild Apples" misses very little in promise, and fully half of it is successful poetry. The trouble is that the statue has not been fully cut out of the rock.

But there are splendid passages and there are adequate poems. The swing and sweep of

Some day a river may be put in chains,  
And held from rendezvous with passionate seas,  
To fill these lands with sounds of dancing rains  
And songs of ripening grain and flowering trees

is nobly sufficient. Most of the four "Desert Shadow Songs" are as good, with a different music. And there are a number of endings in which Mr. Dresbach and his explicitness get past any suggestion of moralizing into art.

I have always said I would go somewhere in the autumn  
Away from the lonely sounds and change that grieves—  
But here in my heart is the sound of a distant ocean  
And here in my heart is the sound of these falling leaves.

Dresbach poetry at its best is suggestive and low-toned and has a haunting monotony. It is very much like the clear but dull-colored mesa and plain and willow of which its maker sings. It seems to me to be something no other American poetry has been, and to promise to bring us more than it has brought already.

*Frank Ernest Hill*

## Contributors

RICHARD BUTLER GLAENZER, who lives in Hollywood, California, is a frequent contributor to magazines.

JOHN LOFTUS, of Schenectady, is not more than twenty years old; how much less he is he does not say. He is especially interested in all sides of the Little Theatre Movement, and at present is writing both verse and one-act plays.

SYDNEY KING RUSSELL lives in New York and writes music as well as verse.

MALCOLM VAUGHAN, late of Harvard University, is a resident of Atlanta, Ga.

LUCY HALE STURGES lives in Elmhurst, Ill., FRANCES L. COOPER in San Diego, Calif., and CHARLES DIVINE in Binghamton. At this moment we know no more of them than what those addresses and their poems tell.

ANNE ATWOOD DODGE (MRS. FRANK DODGE) is a resident of Stonington, Conn.



# The Measure

## *A Journal of Poetry*

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PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY

THE EDITORS

at

449 West 22nd Street, New York City

Subscription \$2.50 a year

Single copies 25 cents

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